



## News Release

For Immediate Release

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### **\$1.2 Million Awarded in Workforce Literacy Grants**

*Ten Organizations Aim to Improve Skill Levels of Incumbent Workforce*

INDIANAPOLIS (May 8, 2006) -- The Indiana Department of Workforce Development today announced that ten Indiana companies or organizations will receive \$1.2 million in workforce literacy grants aimed at raising the workplace skills level of Indiana's workers.

The new 21<sup>st</sup> Century Workforce Skills Initiative is a demonstration project that is a forerunner of a larger state effort designed to address the state's workplace basic skills deficit. A study released in January 2005 by the Indiana Chamber of Commerce found that one in three workers in Indiana had workplace literacy skills below nationally-identified minimum standards necessary for successful employment in a knowledge-based economy.

The grant recipients, city and the amount of the grants are:

Clarian Health Partners	Indianapolis	\$200,000
The Center for Workforce Innovation	Valparaiso	\$184,000
Indiana Health Industry Forum	Indianapolis	\$200,000
Ivy Tech Community College, South Bend	South Bend	\$198,650
Ivy Tech Community College, Bloomington	Bloomington	\$200,000
Center for Mental Health	Anderson	\$49,927
Steuben County Literacy Coalition	Angola	\$43,634
St. Francis Healthcare Foundation	Beech Grove	\$49,608
Vincennes University for Aisin USA	Vincennes	\$45,864*
Vincennes University for Wishard Hospital	Vincennes	\$44,657**

"The goal of these demonstration grants is to raise the basic skill levels of Indiana workers while exploring the viability and effectiveness of different models of workplace basic literacy education," said Commissioner of Workforce Development Ron Stiver.

"We need to become more efficient and effective in how we train and retrain our adult workers in Indiana if we are to compete successfully in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It's becoming increasingly important that such education and training be delivered in the context of students' occupations and careers. If students see learning tied to career advancement, they will be more likely to engage and persist in improving their skill levels."

Approximately 2,600 Hoosier workers will be receive training under the grants.

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Workforce Skills Initiative is part of Governor Daniels' new strategic economic development plan, *Accelerating Growth*, announced two weeks ago. The state's new plan has a target of eliminating functional illiteracy in the workforce, training Hoosier adults to reach 21<sup>st</sup> century basic skill levels. The plan also calls for the establishment of a new office of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Career Education to expand upon existing offerings and better meet workplace literacy needs.

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Workforce Skills Initiative, which is funded from a federal grant, has the following goals:

- Increase the basic skills of incumbent, emerging, and dislocated workers by at least one level;
- Pilot a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Workplace Skills Certificate;
- Determine the most promising delivery models for workforce basic skills education;
- Build the capacity of workforce basic skills educators.

The Indiana Department of Workforce Development is charged with continually improving the Hoosier workforce by assisting companies to create new jobs and improve worker skills. The agency offers a variety of training and educational grants, partners with Indiana's 26 WorkOne Centers, administers the unemployment insurance system, provides labor market information, assists employers with preparing workers for layoffs and closures and operates a statewide job placement service.

Capsule summaries of each grant are attached.

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\*Aisin USA is based in Seymour.

\*\*Wishard Health Services is located in Indianapolis.

## **Workforce Literacy Grants Summaries**

**Clarian Health Partners** – Clarian Health Partners will create a structured Workplace Basic Skills Program for employees of Clarian's three downtown hospitals. The purpose is to strengthen the basic workplace competencies of their employees including reading, writing, math, problem-solving, critical thinking, computer literacy, communications, teamwork, and English as a second language. The new program will also provide counseling, resources and supportive services to facilitate earning college degrees and occupational certifications in health-related disciplines. The total number of trainees involved is 180.

**The Center for Workforce Innovation** – The Center for Workforce Innovation will work with Ivy Tech Community College and the adult basic education system to develop a contextual workplace basic skills curriculum for the employers of the Port of Indiana and the International Longshoreman Association. Fifty employees will be involved in this grant.

**Indiana Health Industry Forum** – The Indiana Health Industry Forum will develop contextually-based training curriculum for manufacturers of healthcare products that can be used to increase workplace basic skills in their three manufacturing pilot firms (Boston Scientific, Cook Urological, and Hill-Rom). The curriculum will be highly contextual and workplace relevant and will be used for other manufacturers of healthcare products in the future. They are also developing an individual critical skills plan for each worker based on their scores in each assessed area. A total of 1,100 employees at the three manufacturers will be involved.

**Ivy Tech Community College, South Bend** – Ivy Tech Community College, South Bend, will be working with a consortium of employers to increase basic skill levels. Tutoring services, classes using two-way videos and a project-based curriculum emphasizing real-world issues and practices are the key elements of this initiative. The number of employees involved from the consortium total 263.

**Ivy Tech Community College, Bloomington** – Ivy Tech Community College, Bloomington, will collaborate with Benchmark Hospitality International at French Lick Springs Resort to help prepare new employees in the subject areas of math, reading, computer literacy, soft skills, communication, critical thinking and problem solving. A total of 825 employees will be involved.

**Center for Mental Health** – The Center for Mental Health is creating a three-phase training program that includes personality inventories, customized training curriculum and computer literacy certification for their staff of residential coaches. Sixty employees will be involved.

**Steuben County Literacy Coalition** – Steuben County Literacy Coalition will work with Salga, Inc, a plastics manufacturer, to increase basic skills in a contextual learning

environment. Instruction in math, reading, writing, computer literacy, English as a second language, critical thinking and problem solving will be delivered within the framework of the participants work environment. Twenty-five employees will be involved.

**St. Francis Healthcare Foundation** – St. Francis will create a three-level HEALTH Program, Helping Employees Advance Learning through Healthcare. The new program will include medical terminology and anatomy and physiology curriculum to the adult basic education curriculum in order to introduce health science education at each of the three levels of HEALTH training. The total number of employees involved is 72.

**Vincennes University for Aisin USA** – Aisin will offer two sections of customized, on-site 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace skills training for production associates. The customized instructional activities will blend program-wide learning activities and not be rigidly constrained to course titles. Individuals will be paid for their time in training and each enrollee will complete an individual learning plan. Thirty employees will be involved in this grant.

**Vincennes University for Wishard Hospital** – Wishard will offer two sections of customized, on-site 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace skills training for entry-level associates. The customized instructional activities will blend program-wide learning activities and not be rigidly constrained to course titles. Individuals will be paid for their time in training and each enrollee will complete an Individual Learning Plan. Thirty employees will be involved in this grant.